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Lawyers Seek Probe of Harbor Mining

More than 200 Southern California attorneys called Thursday for the appointment of an independent special prosecutor to investigate whether "high U.S. government officials" violated federal law by authorizing the mining of Nicaraguan harbors.

At a press conference in Los Angeles, spokesmen for the group, calling itself the Lawyers Committee for Ethics in International Relations, said the U.S. Neutrality Act prohibits any person from funding or participating in a naval or military expedition against a country with which the United States is at peace.

Congressional leaders who were

briefed on the mining operation said last month that the CIA financed and supervised the mine laying, which was carried out by anti-Sandinista rebels.

"How can the people be expected to respect the law when it is being violated at the highest levels of government?" asked Ben Margolis, one of 240 lawyers who signed a letter to U.S. Atty. Gen. William French Smith asking that he seek the appointment of a special prosecutor.

Among those signing the letter is former U.S. Appellate Court Justice Shirley Hufstедler, who was secretary of education in the Carter Administration.